



## *AOT in Action*

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

On Saturday, AOT will proudly launch the National Geographic Arizona - Sonora Desert Region Geotourism MapGuide. This guide is the first bi-national MapGuide that National Geographic has done and I'm honored to have the Sonora Desert region be part of this endeavor. This guide is the result of a year-long grassroots effort and could not have happened without a true partnership with National Geographic, the Sonora Office of Tourism, the Bureau of Land Management, the Sonoran Institute and the Arizona Mexico Commission. The guide features nearly 80 Arizona restaurants, museums, hotels, national monuments and attractions that reflect geotourism, which is tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, heritage and the well-being of its residents.

AOT plans to promote geotourism within the Grand Canyon State through the launch of the Arizona Origins, a Web site accessible from [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com). It is an interactive site that includes more than 350 of the geotourism sites nominated by communities but not incorporated on the hard copy MapGuide. AOT has also developed an educational component with workshops and a curriculum to help educate communities in Arizona on the principles and values of geotourism that will ultimately help them better market their Geotourism assets. Stay tuned to future issues of AOT in Action for information on these workshops.

The launch event is open to the public and is being held in conjunction with the Tubac Art Walk. We will kick it off at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 24, at the Tubac Center for the Arts, 9 Plaza Road. I hope to see you there!

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## AOT News Flash

### Arizona Tourism University Presents Geotourism Workshop Series

Please mark your calendars for AOT's newest workshop series featuring "Geotourism." The workshops will focus on Geotourism and how Arizona and its new Arizona Origins initiative will apply and market these important principals. Learn how Arizona and its southern neighbor Sonora are bringing increased attention to the state's unique Geotourism assets through the new Arizona Sonora Desert Geotourism MapGuide which is a cooperative effort with *National Geographic*. The workshops will focus on how you can use these concepts and principles and integrate them into your marketing and product development programs. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at [smartins@azot.gov](mailto:smartins@azot.gov) or by phone at 602-364-3687.

March 28, 2007  
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Pueblo Grande Museum  
4619 East Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

April 3, 2007  
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Tohono Chul Park  
7366 North Paseo Del Norte  
Tucson, AZ 85704

April 4, 2007\*  
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Bisbee, AZ

\*Exact location to be determined.

## Trippin' with AOT

### New Arizona Roadshow Reaches Out to Mexican Travel Market

The Arizona Office of Tourism will target Mexican tour operators and travel agents at the first Arizona Roadshow. AOT plans to make the Roadshow an annual event. This year, the Arizona Roadshow will be held in Mexico City and Guadalajara from May 28 – June 1, 2007. The Roadshow will highlight a prominent guest speaker, destination seminars and tour operator sales

calls. Registration cost is \$1,995 per delegate and includes two nights accommodation in Mexico City and two nights accommodation in Guadalajara. For more information please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at [kswanson@azot.gov](mailto:kswanson@azot.gov).

## Industry News

### Industry Leaders Hail Senate Bill Easing Entry To U.S.

Travel industry leaders Wednesday praised a Senate bill designed to ease visitor entry into the U.S. while tightening security against possible acts of terrorism. "Congress is finally recognizing the important economic and diplomatic contributions of travel to our nation," said Jonathan Tisch, chairman of the Travel Business Roundtable and chief executive of Loews Hotels. "The passage of these reforms in the Senate is a first step to finding the right balance between secure borders and open doors," Jay Rasulo, chairman of the Travel Industry Association as well as Disney Parks and Resorts, said, "These changes, if signed into law, will create more jobs, economic growth, and improve America's image around the world." As reported earlier (*TA*, 3/14), the bill, S-4, which implements recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, will improve travel into the U.S., expand the Visa Waiver Program to include a greater number of countries, create model entry ports providing greater assistance to foreign travelers at the top 20 airports and hire more border officials to alleviate staffing shortages. A House version of the bill passed in January. (*MiMegasite.com*, 3/14; *Travel Weekly.com*, 3/14; *Special to TA*)

### Air Canada Offers Unlimited Travel Pass

Air Canada on Tuesday launched "subscription flight passes" in the United States, offering unlimited travel between the U.S. and Canada for a flat monthly fee. The carrier last year introduced such similarly nonconformist products as unbundled fares and prepaid corporate flight passes, and now is offering several versions of unlimited flight passes--the most flexible of which costs \$3,550 per month for a six-month commitment. Other unlimited pass segment options vary by geographic zone, fare category and commitment length of either three or six months. The product does not carry blackout dates or booking-window restrictions, but must be booked online within two hours of travel. (*Business Travel News.com*, 3/13)

### New Guide Aimed at European Travelers

For the first time in more than a decade, Europeans can plan travel to the U.S. using a comprehensive travel guide featuring every state and territory. A million issues of the "Discovery America--USA Travel Guide," published in English, French, German and Italian editions, have been produced by Bellevue, Wash.-based Small World Publications. The magazine includes color photographs and a what it calls a "wide-open" format to showcase the U.S. by regions and activities unique to each area of the country. The guide is presently being distributed throughout Western Europe, primarily at travel shows and travel agencies, with help from tour operators and Visit USA Committees. For details, contact 425-289-3462. (*Special to TA*)

### WTTC Sets Priorities for Tourism Summit

The World Travel & Tourism Council has issued a list of top priorities and critical issues facing the travel industry over the coming decade, in advance of its planned Global Travel & Tourism Summit, scheduled for May 10-12 in Lisbon. The list is the framework for face-to-face discussion among private sector leaders, governments and NGOs, representing a wide array of views and conflicting visions across the world. Participants include easyGroup Chairman Stelios Haji-Ioannou, Zagat Survey co-founder and CEO Tim Zagat, and Expedia President and CEO Dara

Khosrowshahi. The agenda will focus on infrastructure, red tape, the environment and corporate social responsibility. (*Modern Agent.com*, 3/15)

### **Demand Swamps Passport Offices**

Overwhelmed by a record demand for passports, the U.S. State Department said it is weeks behind in issuing the vital documents, panicking thousands of peak-season travelers. Passport agency employees have been ordered to work overtime, including nights and weekends, and 49 new employees were hired this month. Even so, the backlog is so high that it will probably take 10 weeks--instead of the usual four to six--to get a passport. "These are extraordinary circumstances," said Derwood Staeben of the department's Bureau of Consular Affairs. "We are seeing record demand for passports and are issuing them in record numbers...it's obvious from the results that we didn't quite anticipate the spike that we're seeing right now." Passports are now required when flying to and from the U.S. between Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. (*Los Angeles Times.com*; Page 9A, *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*)